



# 12Planet Chat

## end-user manual

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## 1 General

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### 1.1 *How does the chat work?*

On you chat page, your browser will load a Java applet. This may take a few minutes. Once the applet has loaded, the chat window will appear, and you'll be able to converse with others (assuming that someone else is also in the chat room). The applet is run completely by your browser — it isn't actually installed on to your computer.

### 1.2 *Browser Requirements*

You need to have a browser which supports Java in order to use the chat. Netscape 3.0 and above or Internet Explorer 3.0 and above should be sufficient.

Please note that besides supporting Java, you must make sure you have Java enabled on your browser. If your browser won't download the chat applet, check your browser's settings to make sure you have Java enabled.

### 1.3 *Proxy / Firewall Info*

If you are behind a proxy or firewall (which is fairly common at workplaces, schools, and public computer labs), you may be unable to use the chat if your chat services provider didn't purchase the Proxy/Firewall support option. In this case, you should ask the provider to upgrade their server and add the Firewall support module. If they don't do this and if you know who your Network Administrator is, you may wish to ask him/her to grant HTTP access to port 10080.

### 1.4 *What's the difference between the forums and the chat?*

Chatting in the *Chat Room* allows for virtually real-time conversation. You "speak," someone else "speaks" back. As with real conversation, once it's over, it exists only in your memory (though you can click the *Save* button to retrieve that current chat session). The *Forums* allow for a more extended "conversation," which can take place over an extended period of time. Someone starts a topic, a few people may reply one day, a few people the next day, and so on. This allows people to participate in a conversation even if they weren't around when it was started. Each has its benefits, but it's basically a matter of preference as to which one to use.

### 1.5 *I'd like to suggest a feature for the chat - can you add it?*

Please send an email to [ideas@12planet.com](mailto:ideas@12planet.com)

## 2 Chatting

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### 2.1 *How do I enter a message?*

At the very bottom of a chat window is a white text field. Click your mouse in there, type what you'd like to say, and hit your keyboard's *Enter* or *Return* key.

### 2.2 *How do I know what room I'm in?*

If you're unregistered or not logged in, then you're in the Open Topic (Public) room, as this is the only room available for anonymous users. If you're registered and logged in, you can tell what room you're in one of two ways: Directly above the field in which you type your chat messages, you'll see a black status bar. This tells you what room you're in. Also, if you click on the *Rooms* tab on the upper right hand side, you'll see the list of rooms — the room you're in will be highlighted.

### 2.3 *How do I change rooms?*

If you're unregistered or not logged in, then you cannot change rooms, as only one room is available for unregistered users. If you're registered and logged in, you can click on the *Rooms* tab, and you'll see the list of available rooms. Just click once on the name of the room you wish to switch to, and you'll be entered into that room.

### 2.4 *What's with the sounds?*

When someone enters the room you're in, you'll hear a "thud" sound (i.e. the sound of a door closing). When someone initiates a private chat with you, you'll hear a beeping sound (i.e. the sound of a beeper/pager). If you'd rather not hear these sounds, feel free to mute the volume on your speakers.

### 2.5 *Can I change my name?*

If you are unregistered, you can change your name between chat sessions by simply entering a new nickname in the box at the login page. If you are a registered user, we can change your name for you (permanently) if you simply send us an e-mail with your old username as well as the one you would like to change it to. Please don't just register a new name! Please keep in mind that we generally will only change your name once, so choose a name that you like (and think about what a challenge it was for your parents to name you.)

### 2.6 *Can I change the color that my chat messages appear in?*

Yes. Just above the area where you type your chat messages, you'll see a drop-down box. Click on the down arrow, and you'll see a list of colors. Click on a color to choose it as the color that your chat messages appear in. All users, including you, will see your messages in this color. This can help everyone to keep track of who's who. However, please keep in mind that some colors will be very hard or impossible to read (such as yellow, green, and, of course, white). Unfortunately, we cannot change these colors (though we may be able to in a future upgrade at some point in the future) — please choose a color that other users will be able to read. Also note that when you whisper to someone, you'll see that text in the regular color (black), and when you have a private chat with someone, your chosen text color will not apply in the private chat window.

## 3 The Chat Interface

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### 3.1 *What does the Float button do?*

This pops the chat area out into its own window, so that you can resize it or move it around.

### 3.2 *What does the Private button do?*

If you have another user's name highlighted (which you can do just by clicking on their name), you can click on this button to initiate a private chat with that user. If you do not have another user's name highlighted, the button will do nothing.

### 3.3 *What does the My Profile button do?*

The *My Profile Button* will appear if you have your own username selected. If you are a registered member it will open your Forum Profile for viewing in a new window. If you are an unregistered user, clicking on the My Profile button will open up your "Visit Card," where you can fill something out for other people to see if they click on your name and choose *Profile*. The "Visit Card" will only be saved for you during that particular chat session. (See below for related information.)

### 3.4 *What does the Profile button do?*

If you select another chat user's name (by clicking on it) and click the *Profile* button, it will show that person's profile. If this person is a registered member, it will open up a new browser window with that person's profile from the forums. If this person is an unregistered user, it will show that person's "Visit Card." (See above for related information.)

### 3.5 *What does the Ignore button do?*

If you have another user's name highlighted (by clicking on it), it enables you to ignore or to stop ignoring other users. If you do not have another user's name highlighted, the *Ignore* button will do nothing.

### 3.6 *What does the Help button do?*

It brings you to these Help pages.

### 3.7 *What does the Save button do?*

It allows you to save the current conversation. Just click the button, and a new window will open up with a transcript of the current chat session. If another user is seriously harassing you, please press the save button and copy the transcription of the chat into an e-mail to us that states what took place and when.

### 3.8 *What does the ? button do?*

It just gives you a bit of information about InfoChat, the chat software.

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## 4 Commands

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### 4.1 How do I do an action message? (/me msg)

An action message will show up as **\*\*username\*\*** *does this, that, and the other thing*, where username is your name. To do this, you type in the chat area: */me does this, that, and the other thing*, and then hit your keyboard's *Enter* or *Return* key. This is how you describe "actions" that you are doing in the chat room. For example, you might type */me waves hello to Jane*. The users in the chat room will see: **\*\*Your\_Name\*\*** *waves hello to Jane*. This command will only work for speaking to the entire chat room.

### 4.2 How do I start a private chat with someone if they are in a different room than me? (/p username msg)

If you would like to have a private chat with someone who is not in the same room as you, you first need to know that someone's exact username. Then, to send them a cross-room "page," you would type */p username I'm over here*, where username is your friend's username. For example, if you know that your friend Jane is in another room, you might type: */p Jane Come to the Sports room!*. Jane would then see a private chat window pop up containing your message. When she replied, a private chat window would pop up on your screen as well, and then the two of you could converse.

If you try to "page" someone who is not online, a message will appear in your chat window telling you that the party is not online. If you type their username incorrectly, you will also see this message.

### 4.3 How do I let someone know that I'm away from the computer for a little bit if they try to whisper to me or start a private chat with me? (/away automatic\_answer)

If you are leaving the computer for a little while, you may want to type */away I'm eating dinner*. This will alert all the users in the room that you are eating dinner. (They'll see: *Username is away. Message: I'm eating dinner.*) If someone tries to whisper to you or start a private chat with you, they will get this message automatically sent to them. The */away* command stops automatically responding when you once again show activity in the chat.

## 5 Floating the Chat Window

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### 5.1 *What does it mean to Float?*

In the upper left corner of the chat area, you'll see a *Float* button. Clicking this will open the chat area in its own window, off of the main chat page, so that you can resize it or move it around. To move it, simply click on the blue title bar at the top, and - while holding your mouse button down - pull your mouse around until the window is where you want it. You can resize the window just like any other window.

### 5.2 *Can I close or leave the main window after I float the chat?*

No. If you close the main chat window (the one that the chat area was originally a part of), you will not be able to chat anymore. You will also be unable to chat if you leave the main chat page by going to another site, even if you come back afterward. You *can*, however, minimize the main chat page, and you can open up other browser windows if you wish to view another page while chatting. Just make sure you leave the main chat page open.

### 5.3 *After I've floated the chat window, how do I get it back onto the chat page?*

In the upper left corner of the chat area, where the *Float* button was, you will now see a *Dock* button. Just click this button, and the chat will be embedded into the main chat page again.



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## 6 Viewing / Changing / Creating Rooms

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### 6.1 How do I see a list of all the rooms?

On the right side of the chat window, you'll see two tabs, *Users* and *Rooms*. Click on *Rooms* to see a list of available rooms.

A sample list of chat rooms, based on topic, could be as follows:

- **Topic 1**— For on topic discussion of *Topic1*.
- **Topic 2**— For on topic discussion of *Topic2*.
- **Open Topic**— For any discussion, on topic or off. This room is open to all users, including unregistered users.

### 6.2 What does the number beside a room name mean?

To the left of each room name, you'll see a number. This lets you know the number of people currently in each room. It does include you in the room you're in. Click the *Refresh* button to make sure that the list is current and showing the most recent information.

### 6.3 How do I change rooms?

When viewing the Rooms list, simply click on a room's name to enter that room.

### 6.4 What does the Create button do?

This will allow you to create a room where you and others can go if other rooms are getting too full, or you don't like the conversation going on there, or you want to create you own topic to talk about. Simply click the *Create* button and a window will pop up asking you what you want to name the room. You can make the room either public (open to anyone) or private (which requires a password). If you want the room to be public, then **make sure the name of the room does not include any spaces!** Simply type *PartyRoom* or *Party\_Room*, for example. All users will see this room in the list and will be able to join you there by clicking on the room name.

If the room name contains spaces, it will assign the second word as a password into that room. So, if you want to invite only a few people into a room of your own, you could click the *Create* button and type *PartyRoom mypass* — the name of the room would become *PartyRoom* and the password would be *mypass*. This means that if another user wants to get into that room, they will have to know the password (all users will be able to see the room in the list, but when they click on it, they'll be prompted for the password). You can always whisper the password to them so that it doesn't show to other users, or send them the password via private chat. Please note that this is only recommended if you want to have a private chat with more than one person — if it's only for you and one other person, just click on the user's name and click *Private* to initiate a private chat session.

Any room that you create will be deleted automatically after it has been empty and inactive for a while.

### 6.5 What does the Refresh button do?

When you're viewing the Rooms list, you'll see a *Refresh* button beneath the list. Clicking this will refresh the list to give you the most recent count of users in each room.

## **7 Ignoring Users**

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### **7.1 *How do I ignore someone?***

To ignore someone, simply click on their name in the Users list to highlight it, and click the *Ignore* button at the bottom right of the Users list.

### **7.2 *What happens when I ignore someone?***

When you ignore someone, you'll see an **X** to the left of their name in the Users list. When they post a message to the chat room, you won't see it. If they try to whisper to you, you won't see it. If they try to initiate a private chat with you, you won't receive it. The user you're ignoring will not know that you're ignoring them, though they may catch on if they're trying to talk to you and find that you're not responding. Also, you can still initiate a private chat with a user you're ignoring, but when they reply, you won't see their reply. Please do not do this to the users you're ignoring.

### **7.3 *Why would I want to ignore someone?***

You might want to ignore someone if they're harassing you in some way, or if you simply find them annoying in some way. If they are seriously harassing you, please report the problem to your chat administrator. The e-mail should include the transcript of the chat that you get by clicking the *Save* button, your username and the username of the offending party, and the time and day that the chat took place (in US Pacific time, if possible).

### **7.4 *How do I stop ignoring someone?***

To stop ignoring someone, simply click on their name in the Users list to highlight it, and click the *Ignore* button again. The **X** by their name will disappear and you will be able to "hear" them again.

## 8 Whispering

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### 8.1 *What is whispering?*

Whispering is a method of chatting with someone in a way that only the person you're whispering to sees the message. Unlike a private chat, the text does appear in the main chat area, but it's invisible to everyone except for the whisperer and whisperee.

### 8.2 *How do I whisper to someone?*

In the Users list, click on the user's name to highlight it. Directly above the field in which you type your messages, you will see, "You are now whispering to \_\_\_\_\_.\" (Make sure you've selected the right name, and be sure that it doesn't say, "You are talking to everyone.") Then just type your message as usual. In the chat area, you'll see "You -> Whisperee: Your message.\" No one else will see this. The person you whispered to will see, in green text, "[[Your name]]: Your message.\" No one else will see this.

### 8.3 *How do I stop whispering to someone?*

To stop whispering to someone and go back to chatting with the whole room, click *To All Users* at the top of the Users list. To whisper to someone else, just click on their name in the User's list.

### 8.4 *How do I know if someone is whispering to me?*

If someone whispers to you, you'll see the whispered message in green text, like this: "[[Whisperer's name]]: Whispered message.\" No one else will see this.

### 8.5 *Can I prevent people from whispering to me?*

You can prevent individual users from whispering to you by ignoring them. This will also mean that you won't see anything they type to the public either.

## 9 Private Chat

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### 9.1 *What is a private chat?*

A private chat is a method of chatting with another user in a separate window (not the main chat window). If you find yourself having a conversation with another user, to the exclusion of other users in the room, you should probably have a private chat instead.

### 9.2 *How do I start a private chat with someone?*

To initiate a private chat with someone, click on their name in the Users list to highlight it, and click the *Private* button. A new chat window will pop up and you'll hear a beeping sound (if you have speakers hooked up and turned up). In the bottom text field, type your message and hit your keyboard's *Enter* or *Return* key (just like the main chat area). After you submit the message, the user you selected will see a similar window pop up and will hear the beeping alert. The two of you can then carry on a conversation with each other in that window (if the other user wishes to do so).

### 9.3 *What do I do if someone initiates a private chat with me?*

If someone initiates a private chat with you, a private chat window will pop up and you'll hear a beeping alert (if you have speakers hooked up and turned up). In the main chat area of that window, you'll see the message that the other user has sent you. To reply, click your mouse in the bottom text field, type your message and hit your keyboard's *Enter* or *Return* key (just like the main chat area). The two of you can then carry on a conversation in that window.

### 9.4 *How do I end a private chat?*

To end a private chat, simply close the private chat window. It would probably be a good idea to let the other person know that you're ending it, or they may continue to chat with you, which will cause the window to open up again.

### 9.5 *Can I prevent people from trying to private chat with me?*

If you wish to prevent a user from trying to have a private chat with you, you can ignore them.

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## 10 Troubleshooting

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### ***10.1 Some users are chatting in a text color that I can't read very well.***

Yes, some of the colors available are difficult or impossible to read. Unfortunately, at this time, we have no control over the color options and cannot remove the bad colors or add better ones. Therefore, it's up to the users not to use illegible colors. If someone is using a color that you can't read, you'll probably want to politely suggest that they not use that color.

### ***10.2 I clicked on Private, but nothing happened.***

Make sure that the name of the person you want to open a private chat with is highlighted. Also, you have to initiate the conversation. The other person won't get the pop-up window for the private chat until you type something and hit *Enter* or *Return* on your keyboard.

### ***10.3 I tried to whisper to someone, but it went out to everyone.***

Make sure that the name of the person you want to whisper to is highlighted. You will know that you are whispering if the text you type in the box is purple. It will be black if it is going to go out to everyone. Double check to make sure that the user you want to whisper with is highlighted, and look at the black status bar directly above the typing area to make sure it says, *You are whispering to Some\_Username*.

### ***10.4 I got logged out of the chat room.***

Something happened to your internet connection and you were lost, or you closed the chat window. You should simply log back in.

### ***10.5 I had the chat floated, but it disappeared.***

You can't close the browser window that originally contained the chat applet (the one with the big gray box in the middle), which we generally refer to as the main chat page. Closing that window will cause your floated chat window to disappear as well, since the applet was in the main chat page. Alternatively, you could have been disconnected by your ISP. Make sure that you are still connected to the internet.

### ***10.6 I was floating the chat and left the main page, and I couldn't chat anymore OR my browser crashed.***

If you go to another page or site in the browser window that originally contained the chat applet (the one with the big gray box in the middle), the floated chat window may cease to function, or your browser might crash. If you want to visit another page or site, simply open another browser window to do so. You can minimize the main chat page, but you must leave it open.